(b) The under-recoveries of OMCs on marketing of sensitive petroleum products that remained uncovered despite the price hike are currently estimated at Rs.1.47 lakh crore, based on the prices of 2nd fortnight of October, 2008. The details are given below:

PDS Kerosene	Rs./Litre	28.07
Domestic LPG	Rs./Cyl.	322.14
Petrol	Rs./Litre	2.37
Diesel	Rs./Litre	6.45

(c) For the week ending 7th June 2008, the inflation rate was 11.66% for all the commodities, out of which 1.16% was contributed by the increase in the prices of Domestic LPG, Petrol and Diesel.

(d) The Profit after Tax (PAT) earned by the OMCs namely; Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPC) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPC) during the last year is given below:

(Rs. crore)

	2007-08
IOC	6962.52
BPC	1580.56
HPC	1134.88
TOTAL	9677.96

CoCo retail outlets

408. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has found that the Company-owned-Company-operated (CoCo) retail outlets of public sector oil companies are no more viable;

(b) if so, whether Government has asked the public sector oil marketing companies to divest most of their retail outlets to special category applicants;

(c) whether the oil marketing companies would still retain select outlets to be run on CoCo basis for brand support; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (d) With a view to reduce the number of pending Latter of Intent (LOI) holders, Ministry *vide* letter dated 6th September, 2006, had issued broad guidelines to public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs), *viz.*, Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOC), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) for operation of Company-owned-Company-operated (CoCo) retail outlets. As per these broad guidelines, the temporary CoCo retail outlets are to be offered to the pending

LOI-holders under Special Scheme (Operation Vijay- Kargil), Discretionary Quota Scheme, Corpus Fund Scheme (SCs/STs, widows and unmarried women above 40 years of age without earning parents) and other categories in that order. Permanent CoCos, which are of strategic importance for the OMCs for brand building and training purposes are to be operated permanently by the companies themselves through their own officers. The details of these permanent CoCos is available with Director (Marketing) of OMCs.

LPG connections in Jharkhand

409. SHRI PARIMAL NATHWANI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry is aware that many districts of Jharkhand like Chatra, Garhwa, Godda, Gumla, Pakour and Palamu have less than 2.5 per cent of households there using LPG; and

(b) whether there is any plan to allot more LPG connections in these districts so that chopping of trees for fuel-wood is arrested?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b) As on 01.10.2008, OMCs were operating 143 LPG distributorships in the State of Jharkhand. Through these distributorships, OMCs are serving about 11.45 lakh LPG customers including 94160 LPG customers in Chatra, Garhwa, Godda, Gumla, Pakour and Palamu district of Jharkhand, covering 21.4% estimated population as on 01.03.2008 in the State. 11 more new LPG distributorships have been planned and advertised in the State of Jharkhand, including 2 in Palamu.

The enrolment of new LPG customers and release of new LPG connections is a continuous process. Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have reported that at present, new LPG connections are available across the counter for genuine domestic customers. OMCs have further reported that they have released 1.035 lakh, 1.033 lakh and 0.247 lakh new LPG connections in the State of Jharkhand during the years 2006-07, 2007-08 and April-September, 2008 respectively.

As on 01.10.2008, OMCs are serving more than one lakh LPG customers of 5 kg cylinders in the State of Jharkhand in order to meet the demand of low-income groups in urban, semi-urban and rural pockets and also extend the reach of LPG to the hilly terrain and interior areas in the country on account of convenience in transportation.

Exploration activities in Saurashtra and Kutch region

410. SHRI VIJAYKUMAR RUPANI:
SHRI NATUJI HALAJI THAKOR:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state: